LOCAL | A3

STORM READY

Gadsden/Etowah County EMA gets ready to observe Severe Weather Awareness Week

NATION | A5

OLD ENOUGH?

Shooting revives debate over gun age requirement

The Gadsden Times

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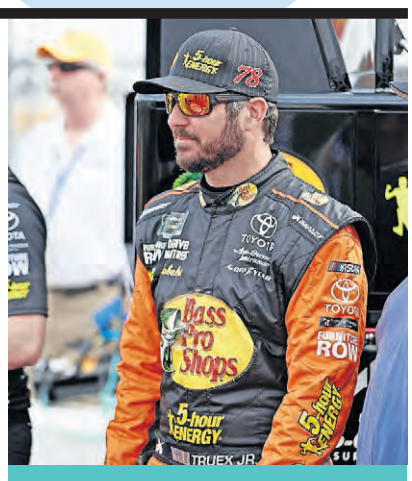
February frenzy

The Pete Mathews Coliseum at Jacksonville State University was filled for the opening day of the Alabama High School Athletic Association Northeast Regional tournament. Gadsden City faced Huffman in the Class 7A regional semifinal.

See results from the game on B1. See the photo gallery online at gadsdentimes.com

Gadsden City students yell at a referee during the game against Huffman on Thursday during the AHSAA Northeast Regional Basketball Tournament at Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville. Gadsden City lost 69-62 and were eliminated from the playoffs.

Gadsden City's Darien Hollis shoots as Huffman's Travarus Carroll defends Thursday at Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville.



SPORTS | B1

CHUMP TO CHAMP

Truex Jr. experiences wild career rebirth

Gadsden City coach Reginald Huff has a discussion with Jaylen Cole as the Titans play against Huffman, Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018, during the AHSAA Northeast Regional Basketball Tournament at Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Ala. Gadsden City lost 69-62 and were eliminated from the playoffs. [PHOTOS BY MARC GOLDEN/ GADSDEN TIMES]

Flu shot only 36 percent effective

By Mike Stobbe
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The flu vaccine is doing a poor job protecting older Americans and others against the bug that's causing most illnesses.

Preliminary figures released Thursday suggest the vaccine is 36 percent effective overall in preventing flu illness severe enough to send a patient to the doctor's office.

There's only been one other time in the last decade when the flu vaccine did a worse job.

Most illnesses this winter have been caused by a nasty kind of flu called Type A H3N2. The vaccine was only 25 percent effective against that type.

This kind of virus tends to cause more suffering and have been responsible for the worst recent flu seasons. But experts have wondered whether low vaccine effectiveness is another reason for the surprisingly severe season hitting the United States this winter.

Based on these numbers, the answer is yes.

"The fact that the vaccine doesn't work as well as we would like is clearly a contributing factor," said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University vaccine expert.

The estimates were published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The numbers are a snapshot taken in the middle of a frantic flu season. They are based on relatively small numbers of people and they are considered preliminary. Numbers may change as the season continues and more patients are added to the study.

And experts say it's still worth getting a flu shot. It still provides some protection, it can lessen the illness's severity, keep people out of the hospital, and save lives. There are as many as 56,000 deaths connected to the flu during a bad year.

"Any type of vaccine is better

See FLU, A6

LIFE | C1

CULT FOLLOWING

The acceleration of #vanlife

Sheriff's report: Suspect confessed to school attack

By Terry Spencer, Kelli Kennedy and Tamara Lush
The Associated Press

PARKLAND, Fla. — The teenager accused of using a semi-automatic rifle to kill 17 people at a Florida high school confessed to carrying out one of the nation's deadliest school shootings and concealing extra ammunition in his backpack, according to a sheriff's department report released Thursday.

The report from the Broward County Sheriff's Office said Nikolas Cruz told investigators that he shot students in the hallways and on the grounds of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, north of Miami.

Cruz told officers he brought more loaded magazines to

See SHOOTING, A6

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Classifieds B4
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Life C1
Weather A10

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
P.M. rain	*Showers*	*Mostly cloudy*
66° / 45°	*66° / 42°*	*66° / 53°*